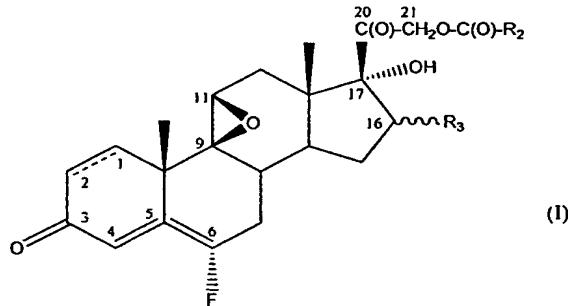


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing: of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of 6α -fluoro compounds of formula I,

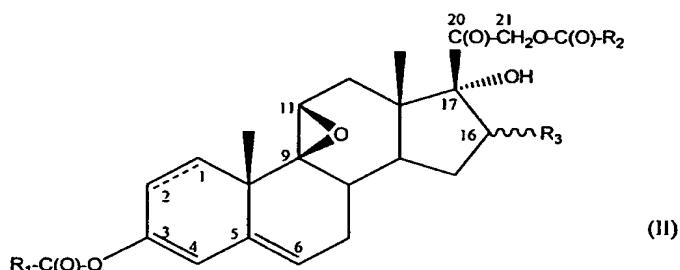


(I)

wherein

R_2 is hydrogen, C_1 - C_8 alkyl or C_3 - C_8 cycloalkyl; and

R_3 is hydrogen, C_1 - C_8 alkyl, or R_4 - $C(O)$ - O - where R_4 is C_1 - C_8 alkyl or C_1 - C_8 hydroxyalkyl; comprising the fluorination of pregnane derivatives in the 6-position with an electrophilic fluorination agent, in an inert solvent and at ambient temperatures, characterized characterised in that (1) a compound of formula II



(II)

wherein

R_1 is phenyl or phenyl substituted with halogen, hydroxy, amino, mono- or di- C_1 - C_8 alkylamino, C_1 - C_8 alkyl, C_1 - C_8 alkoxy and/or C_1 - C_8 carbalkoxy; and R_2 and R_3 have the meanings given before; is reacted with an electrophilic fluorination agent (2) in the presence of a salt of a strong acid with a nitrogenous base under (3) substantial water-free reaction conditions.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein R₂ is methyl.

3. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~claims~~claim 1 or 2, wherein R₃ is hydrogen, methyl or acetoxy.

4. (Currently Amended) A process according to any one of claims 1 to 2~~claims 1 to 3~~, wherein R₁ is phenyl or phenyl substituted with fluorine, chlorine, hydroxy, dimethylamino, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy or~~and~~ methoxycarbonyl.

5. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the solvent is selected from the group of nitriles, N-dialkylated carboxylic acid amides or N-alkylated cyclic carboxylic acid amides, ethers and carboxylic esters.

6. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction temperature is from -20°C to 50°C.

7. (Original) A process according to claim 8, wherein the fluorinating agent is 1-chloromethyl-4-fluoro-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2.2.2]octane-bistetrafluoroborate, or 1-fluoro-4-hydroxy-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2.2.2]octane-bistetrafluoroborate.

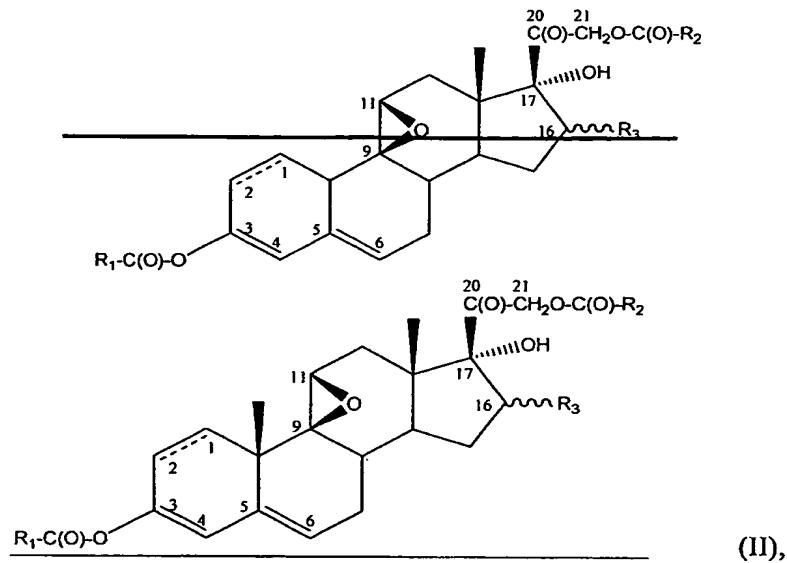
8. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the salt is an amine salt corresponding~~corresponds~~ to formula III,

$$\text{HB}^+\text{A}^- \quad (\text{III})$$

wherein HB⁺ is the cation of an aliphatic, aromatic, cyclic aliphatic or cyclic aromatic nitrogen base, and A⁻ is the anion of a strong organic or inorganic acid, and wherein the amine salt is preferably pyridine-methylsulfonate.

9. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the amount of amine~~the~~ salt is from 0.1 to 100-and ~~preferably 50 to 90 percent~~ by weight, referred to the amount of compounds of formula II.

10. (Currently Amended) Compounds of formula II,



wherein R_1 is phenyl substituted with halogen, hydroxy, amino, mono- or di- C_1-C_8 alkylamino, C_1-C_8 alkyl, C_1-C_8 alkoxy and/or C_1-C_8 carbalkoxy, R_2 and R_3 have the meanings given in claim 1, with the proviso that R_4 is not phenyl, when R_2 and R_3 are methyl.

11. (New) A process according to claim 3, wherein R_1 is phenyl or phenyl substituted with fluorine, chlorine, hydroxy, dimethylamino, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy or methoxycarbonyl.

12. (New) The process according to claim 8, wherein the amine salt is pyridine methylsulfonate.

13. (New) The process according to claim 9, wherein the amount of the salt is 50 to 90 percent by weight, referred to the amount of compounds of formula II.